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10 June 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: White House Meeting of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group--9 June 1971

1. On 9 June 1971, I attended a meeting of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group in the Situation Room of the White House. The meeting was chaired by General Al Haig and among those present were the following: Ken BeLieu, John Lehman, John Scali and Dick Cook of the White House staff; Dave Abshire of State Department; and Rady Johnson of Defense Department.

2. Items of interest to the Agency were the following:

a. RFE/RL: Mr. Abshire said apparently Senator Fulbright did not have the support of a majority of the Foreign Relations Committee in his effort to kill the legislation regarding RFE/RL, therefore resorted to the delaying tactic of having Legislative Reference in the Library of Congress do a study of the effectiveness of these programs.

Mr. Lehman said George Shultz, OMB, had sent a letter to Senator Ellender regarding funding the Radios under the continuing resolution.

Mr. Abshire commented the real problem was how to get Senators Sparkman and Aiken, during Senator Fulbright's temporary absence over the next week or ten days, to press the Legislative Reference Service to move as quickly as possible on the study of the Radios' effectiveness.

General Haig suggested we try to find out who was doing the study in the Library of Congress and ascertain if we had any influence with them. I said I thought it would be a mistake for the Agency to intervene in this fashion but would be glad to pass on to State any information we picked up.

I commented that, privately at least, Frank Shakespeare had spoken very highly of the Radios and his views might carry some weight with the Committee, providing State saw no objection to his speaking up on the matter. Mr. Abshire said this was worth considering, and we should also try to find some outside

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DOS and OSD review(s) completed.

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authorities who could testify to the Radios' effectiveness. He mentioned Zbigniew Brezinski as one possibility, adding that the old war horses like Clay and Gruenther should be kept in the background .

General Haig said the main problem was to "keep up the momentum." He also directed that State and CIA should work together to prepare a "documentary," in support of the continuation of the Radios which would include material which could be used in debates on the floor or to brief members who could be helpful. He also said thought should be given to a "fall back position" in the face of Fulbright's opposition. In addition, he said we should give some thought to stirring up the Jewish community which had been favorable to the Radios in the past.

b. Symington Amendment: In discussing Senator Symington's proposed $200 million ceiling for FY 1972 on U.S. operations in Laos, it apparently was assumed this ceiling would apply not only to ground force operations, but to tactical air support, at least in the north. On this assumption, General Haig said "we obviously couldn't possibly live" with the Symington amendment.

It was agreed that State should prepare, with the cooperation and support of Defense and CIA,unclassified "talking papers" and draft speeches which friendly members might make from the floor pointing out the mischief which the Symington amendment would create and the broad implications of the U.S. standdown in Laos which it would produce. Mr. Abshire indicated that Marshall Green would probably be the State Department officer responsible for pulling this material together.

It was also agreed that State and Defense would work on preparing a target list of senators who could be approached for assistance in the matter.

Messrs. Abshire and BeLieu commented that a main difficulty was that Symington and his supporters, such as Fulbright, Case and the members of the Foreign Relations Committee, knew more about the situation in Laos than "our friends," since they had had access to the Moose/Lowenstein report. Mr. Abshire said that we couldn't expect our "friends" to speak up so long as they

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were not confident that they knew all the facts. Therefore, he recommended that a select group of sympathetic senators be briefed jointly by State, Defense and CIA on all the relevant facts so they would feel sufficiently confident to face Symington and Fulbright in floor debate if necessary.

I said we would be glad to support the White House and State in the foregoing, and would probably have no problem in participating in the briefing if it was called by the White House, but I felt CIA should remain very much in the background lest, by too obvious involvement, our contribution proved counter-productive. This apparently was accepted.

25X1 [redacted]

JOHN M. MAURY
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